

MONODY

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,

LATE

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

&c. &c. &c.

BY MRS. MARY ROBINSON.

“ Thus when thy draughts, O RAFFAELLE ! time invades,
“ And the bold figure from the canvas fades,
“ A rival hand recalls from every part
“ Some latent grace, and equals art with art ;
“ Transported we survey the dubious strife,
“ While each fair image, starts again to life.”

BROOME.

LONDON:

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THE PRINCE OF WALES,

AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY, STRAND.

1792.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

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TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,

LATE

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,



BY MRS. MART. ROBINSON.

"Thus when thy draughts, O Raphael! time invades,
"And the bold figure from the canvas fades,
"A rival hand recalls from every part
"Some latent grace, and equals art with art;
"Transported we survey the dubious style,
"While each fair image, seems again to life."

Broom.

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TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

THIS POEM
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY MRS. MARY ROBINSON.

MONDAY

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MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,



IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

THE MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

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MONODY

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

WHEN RESIGNATION, bending from the sky,
Steals the fond lingering tear from VIRTUE'S eye;
When the keen agonies of GRIEF are flown,
And REASON triumphs on her tranquil throne;
The MUSE to Worth and GENIUS tunes her lyre,
While the chords glisten with celestial fire;
The MUSE, in strains untutor'd, and unsought,
Soars on the pinions of enraptur'd thought;
While MEMORY to her eagle eye portrays,
The lustrous tablet of a NATION'S PRAISE;
While FAME exulting, spreads her fostering wings,
And TRUTH spontaneous sweeps the bounding strings!
Hark! the full chords in mystic sounds aspire,
To swell the chorus of the heavenly choir!

Where, to seraphic harps, ethereal borne,
The Song of PATIENCE bids us cease to mourn;
Contemns the tear that gems each kindred eye,
Calms the quick throb, and checks the frequent sigh;
While, midst the blaze of pure Promethean light,
The meek-eyed cherub bends to mortal sight!
See from her dazzling wing soft essence pour
Heaven's sacred balm for Mis'ry's darkest hour;
When Fate inexorable, deals her blow
O'er this rude wilderness of human woe,
'Till VIRTUE, pointing out the purer mind,
Secures the gem, and leaves the dross behind,
Claims the bright spirit from its native clod,
And bears it, spotless, to the sight of God!
Yet, REYNOLDS, while the winged minstrels join
In all the melodies of sounds divine,
Round thy cold image, on its icy bed,
Some light illumines the mansion of the dead;
An unextinguish'd light, that gilds the gloom,
Where weeping GENIUS guards her fav'rite's tomb!
Brightly it shines, where thy pure ashes sleep,
And while pale Melancholy hides to weep,
FAME, with her glittering wing, shall fan the fire,
To shed new lustre on the Muse's lyre!

O, if the graces of pathetic verse
 Can add one trophy to thy sable hearse;
 If the soft sympathy of Sorrow's strain,
 Can, for a moment, soothe the throb of pain;
 Can check the drop that steals from Mem'ry's eye,
 Or calm Affliction's meek and melting sigh;
 Where is the MUSE? why sleep the tuneful throng,
 While BRITAIN'S RAFFAELLE claims the grateful song?

Ye solemn Mourners, who, with footsteps slow,
 Prolong'd the sable line of public woe;
 Who, fondly crouding round his plumed bier,
 Gave to his worth th' involuntary tear;
 Ye children of his School, who oft have hung
 On the grac'd precepts of his tuneful tongue:
 Who many an hour in mute attention caught
 The vivid lustre of his polish'd thought! *
 Ye, who have felt, for ye have taste to feel,
 The magic influence o'er your senses steal,
 When eloquently chaste, from Wisdom's page,
 He drew each model for a rising age!
 Say, is no kind, no grateful tribute due,
 To HIM, who twin'd immortal wreaths for you?

* Vide Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS's Discourses delivered at the Royal Academy.

Who, from the dawn of youth, to manhood's prime,
 Snatch'd hidden beauties from the wings of Time;
 Who gave new lessons to your wond'ring sight,
 Drawn from the chaos of oblivious night;
 Where chain'd by Ignorance, in ENVY's cave,
 The ART he courted found a chilling grave;
 Where native genius faded, unadmir'd,
 While Emulation's glorious flame expir'd;
 'Till REYNOLDS, braving ENVY's recreant spell,
 Dragg'd the huge monster from her thorny cell;
 Who, shrinking from his mild benignant eye,
 Subdued, to Stygian darkness fled--TO DIE!

Now round the brows of British Genius play
 The broad effulgent beams of mental day!
 See, native taste the vivid scene imbues
 With the rich lustre of the rainbow's hues!
 See, from each pencil varying beauties rise,
 While the proud canvas glows with mingling dyes:
 See, Fancy gives to every mimic form,
 New power to fascinate, new grace to charm,
 While o'er each finish'd, each attractive part,
 NATURE stands wond'ring at the touch of ART.

O, if Philanthropy can boast the pow'r,
To sooth affliction's dark and dreary hour;
If HE, who meekly shun'd the flatt'rer's gaze,
Whose splendid talents shrunk from venal praise;
Who, in Retirement's consecrated bow'rs,
Strew'd the rough path of life with modest flow'rs;
Or with a fost'ring hand, to genius just,
Twin'd his own laurel, round each youthful bust;
Can bid your grateful bosoms proudly glow
With innate praise,---*beyond the pomp of woe*,
Now true to native worth, assert his claim
To the *best diadem*! THE WREATH OF FAME!

And thou, CONTENTION; fiend, of ENVY born,
Hide in some haunt profane thy mien forlorn;
Howl in some flinty cave's impervious gloom,
Nor break the sacred silence of the tomb!
Go, prey on hearts congenial with thy own,
Drink their big tears, and mingle in their groan;
Sate thy mean rage upon some *Idiot's* breast,
But let the sainted shade of GENIUS REST!

Beneath yon lofty dome that props the skies,
Low on "the lap of Earth" your Patron lies;
Cold is that hand, that gave the touch divine,
Which bade the mimic orbs of Reason shine;
Clos'd is that eye, which beam'd with living light,
That gave the mental soul, to mortal sight!
For, by the matchless wonders of his art,
The outward mien bespoke the hidden heart!
Taste, feeling, character, his pencil knew,
And TRUTH acknowledg'd e'en what FANCY drew!
So just to Nature every part combin'd,
Each *feature* mark'd the tenour of the *mind*!
'Twas his, with varying excellence, to show
Stern manhood's dignity, and beauty's glow!
To paint the perfect form, the witching face,
With GUIDO's softness, and with TITIAN's grace!
The dimpled cherub at the mother's breast,
The smile serene, that spoke the parent blest;
The POET's vivid thought, that shone divine,
Through the rich mazes of each finish'd line!
The Tale * that bids the tear of pity flow;
The frenzied gaze of petrifying woe;

* The Story of Count Ugolino, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The dying Father, fix'd in horror wild,
O'er the shrunk image of his famish'd child.

AH! STAY, MY MUSE---nor trace the madd'ning scene,
Nor paint the starting eye, the frantic mien;
Turn from the picture of distracting woes;
Turn from each charm, that beauty's smile bestows;
Go, form a wreath, TIME's temples to adorn,
Bedeck'd with many a *rose*---and many a *thorn*;
Go, bind the HERO's brow with deathless bays;
Or to calm friendship chaunt the note of praise;
Or with a feather, stol'n from Fancy's wing,
Sweep, with light hand, the gay fantastic string;
But leave, oh, leave thy fond lamenting song,
The feeble echo of a wond'ring throng:---
Canst thou with brighter tints adorn the rose,
Where Nature's vivid blush divinely glows?
Say, canst thou add one ray to Heav'n's own light;
Or give to Alpine snows a purer white?
Canst thou encrease the diamond's burning glow,
Or to the flow'r a richer scent bestow?
Say, canst thou snatch, by sympathy sublime,
One kindred bosom from the grasp of TIME?

AH, NO! then bind with cypress boughs thy lyre,
Mute be its chords, and quench'd its sacred fire;
For dimly gleam the POET'S votive lays,
Midst the vast splendours of A NATION'S PRAISE!
Yet, blest shall be the MUSE, and blest the art,
That thrills in dulcet murmurs through the heart;
That pictures Nature in her fairest form;
That bids the torpid soul to rapture warm;
That soothes the mind, by sorrow's load oppress'd,
And bends, with force supreme, the tyrant's crest.
Blest be the mingling tones, whose magic leads
Through splendid halls---o'er dew-bespangl'd meads;
The clay-built hut, with rapture to explore,
Or round the diadem's proud gems to soar;
That quell the force of superstitious rage,
And shed new lustre o'er the classic page.
Blest Poetry! whose witching sounds impart
All that can harmonize, or grace the heart;
'Tis thine, with lenient balm, to cure despair;
To check the throbbings of unpitied care;
To bind with weeping flow'rs the lover's urn;
To bid Ambition's brightest incense burn!
SUCH ARE THY ATTRIBUTES! then tune thy lays,
To chaunt thy SISTER ART'S coëval praise;

To PAINTING, lift the loud extatic song,
Wake with celestial notes the vapid throng ;
And as the rapt'rous strains exulting rise,
On Truth's white pinions to the op'ning skies,
Haply, some RAFFAELLE's spirit hov'ring near,
Shall greet the PÆAN with a grateful tear,
And proud to share the glories of the lay,
Shall bear its echoes to the realms of day.
THERE, REYNOLDS, shalt thou claim the votive line,
THERE, smiling own the artless picture THINE ;
And though thy form lies mould'ring in the tomb,
IMMORTAL GENIUS braves the common doom ;
Tho' lost, still honour'd by each feeling heart
That shar'd thy converse, or admir'd thy art ;
And though thy voice no more can charm the breast,
Though thy pure spirit mingles with the blest ;
Thy sainted ashes shall e'en DEATH defy,
For FAME, which VIRTUE gives---SHALL NEVER DIE.

Oh, Britain's darling---Nature's fav'rite child,
In judgment strong, in manners sweetly mild !
Could my fond lay one added wreath bestow,
Long as my heart laments, my strain should flow ;

But, ah! where'er my wand'ring fancy leads,
Whether to pine-clad hills, or flow'ry meads;
Whether at twilight's calm and pensive hour,
I weep, unseen, in some lone ivied bower,
Or, with high-bounding bosom, haste along,
To greet the matin lark's melodious song;
Whether in tones forlorn, or themes divine,
Still shall the strain, the tuneful strain be THINE:
For all that Nature yields, 'twas thine to trace,
Love's sportive smile, and wisdom's sober grace,
Fear, rage, relentless vengeance, shrivel'd care,
And the worst misery of supreme despair;
Then where shall FANCY turn, or TRUTH aspire,
To catch new subjects for her mournful lyre?
Where shall the MUSE untrodden paths explore,
Where find a theme untry'd by THEE before?
Vain is her search! thy penetrating skill
Fashion'd each scene, obedient to thy will;
And stealing every flower, by Nature drest,
Left but the thorn of woe---TO PIERCE HER BREAST.

High o'er the Eastern hill, day's burning eye
Darts streams of radiance thro' the sev'ring sky!

The upland mead reflects a vivid glow
On the calm bosom of the vale below ;
Soon flames meridian lustre o'er the scene,
The out-stretch'd landscape glows with brighter green ;
Soft silky blossoms, bath'd in ling'ring dew,
Ope their sweet breasts, and blush with deeper hues :
But when chill twilight, stealing o'er the West,
Spreads her grey mantle on Eve's humid breast ;
All Nature mourns ! obtrusive shadows veil
The towering mountain, and the lowly dale !
While each meek blossom, scarcely wak'd to birth,
Hides its shrunk head,---and, weeping, fades to earth !

So REYNOLDS shone ! the Phœbus of his day,
While Art and Science own'd his genial ray :
And since those orbs, that shed celestial light,
Are clos'd and faded in impervious night ;
By the mild precepts of his social hours ;
By the strong magic of his mental powers ;
By his meek diffidence ; his modest mien ;
His solid judgment, and his soul serene !
OH, YE ! who owe to each the meed of praise,
Who shar'd the converse of his blameless days,

Who, living, own'd the virtues of his heart;
 Who mark'd the rising glories of his art;
 STILL GUARD HIS FAME! and when, as soon ye must,
 Like him ye mourn, fade to your native dust;
 May the fond MUSE, to WORTH and GENIUS true,
 WITH EQUAL JUSTICE, FORM A WREATH FOR YOU!

THE END.



